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An ORDINANCE OF THE LORDS and COMMONS Assembled in PARLIAMENT

For giving power to all the Classicall Presbyteries

Within their respective Bounds to Examine, Approve, and Ordaine Ministers for severall Congregations.

Die Luna 10 *Novemb.* 1645.

ORdered by the Lords assembled in Parliament, That this Ordinance for Ordination of Ministers shall be forthwith printed and published.

Joh. Brown Cler. Parliamentorum.

Imprinted at *London* for *John Wright* at the Kings head in the old Bayley. 1645.

PARLIAMENT ORDINANCE FOR CLASSICAL PRESBYTERIES

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Die Sabbathi, 8. *Novemb.* 1644.

An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament,

For the Ordination of Ministers.

WHereas the word *Presbyter*, that is to say, Elder, and the word *Bishop* doe in the Scripture intend and signifie one and the same Function, although the Title of Bishop hath been by corrupt custome appropriated to one, and that unto him ascribed, and by him assumed, as in other things, so in the matter of Ordination, that was not meete; which Ordination notwithstanding being performed by him, a Presbyter joyned with other Presbyters, we hold for substance to be valid and not to be disclaimed by any that have received it; and that Presbyters so ordained, being lawfully thereunto appointed and authorized, may ordaine other Presbyters: And whereas it is also manifest by the Word of God, that no man ought to take upon him the Office of a Minister, untill he be lawfully called and ordained thereunto; and that the worke of Ordination, that is to say, an outward solemne setting apart of persons for the Office of the Ministery in the Church by preaching Presbyters, is an Ordinance of Christ, and is to be performed with all due care, wisdome, gravity, and solemnity. It is Ordained by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, and by the authority of the same, (after advice had with the Assembly of Divines now convened at *Westminster*,) That the severall and respective Classicall Presbyters which in their severall and respective bounds, may examine, approve and ordaine Presbyters, according

to the Directory for Ordination, and Rules for Examination, hereafter expreſſed, that is to ſay; Firſt,

Firſt, That he that is to be ordained, muſt addreſſe himſelfe to the Presbytery, and bring with him a teſtimoniall of his taking the Covenant of the three Kingdomes; of his dilligence and proficiency in his Studies; what Degrees he hath taken in the Univerſity, and what hath been the time of his abode there, and withall of his age, which is to be twenty foure yeares at leaſt; but eſpecially of his life and converſation.

Secondly, the Presbytery ſhall proceed to enquire touching the grace of God in him, and whether he be of ſuch holineſſe of life as is requiſite in a Miniſter of the Goſpel, and to examine him touching his learning and ſufficiency, and touching the evidence of his calling to the holy Miniſtery, and in particular, his faire and direct calling to that place to which he is deſigned.

The Rules for Examination are theſe.

1 *THat the party examined be dealt with in a brotherly way, with mildneſſe of ſpirit, and with ſpeciall reſpect to the gravity, modeſty, and quality of every one.*

2 *He ſhall be examined touching his skill in the Originall Tongues; and that tryall to be made by reading the Hebrew and Greek Teſtament, and rendring ſome portions of them into Latine; and inquiry alſo ſhall be made after his other learning, and whether he hath skill in Logick and Philoſophy.*

3 *What Authors in Divinity he hath read and is beſt acquainted with; and triall ſhall be made of his knowledge in the chiefe grounds of Religion, and of his ability to defend the Orthodox Doctrine contained in them, againſt all unſound and erroniou opinions, eſpecially thoſe of the preſent age; of his skill in the ſenſe and meaning of ſuch places of Scripture, as ſhall be propoſed unto him in caſes of Conſcience, and in the Chronologie of Scripture, and of the Eccleſiaſticall Hiſtory.*

4. If he hath not before preached in publike, with approbation of such as are able to judge; he shall at a competent time assigned him, and before the Presbytery, expound such a place of Scripture as shall be given him.

5. He shall in a competent time also frame a discourse in Latine, upon such a common place or controversie in Divinity, as shall be assigned him, & exhibite to the Presbytery such Theses as expresse the sum thereof, and maintain a dispute upon them.

6. He shall preach before the people, the Presbytery, or some of the Ministers of the word, appointed by them, being present

7. The proportion of his gifts in relation to the place unto which he is called, shall be considered.

8. Besides the tryall of his gifts in preaching, he shall undergoe an examination in the Premisses two severall daies or more, if the Presbytery shall judge it necessary.

Thirdly, After which, he being approved, is to be sent to the Church or other place where he is to serve, (if it may be done with safety and conveniency,) there to preach three severall daies, and to converse with the people, that they may have tryall of his gifts for their edification, and may have time and leasure to inquire into, and the better to know his life and conversation.

Fourthly, In the last of those three daies appointed for the making knowne of his gifts in preaching, there shall be sent from the Presbytery to the Congregation, (if it may be done with safety and conveniency,) a publique instrument in writing, which shall publikely be read before the people, and after affixed to the Church doore, to signifie such a day any member or members of the said Congregation, or any other person or persons whatsoever, or any of them, may put in with all Christian discretion and meekneſſe, what exceptions they have against him; and if upon the day appointed there be no just exceptions against him, the Presbytery shall proceed to Ordination.

Fifthly, Upon the day appointed for Ordination (which is to be performed in that Church where he that is to be ordained is to serve, (if it may be done with safety and conveniency,) a solemn Fast shalbe kept by the Congregation, that they may more earnestly

joyne in prayer to God for a blessing upon the person and labour of this his servant, solemnly to be set apart to the office of the Ministery for their good; the Presbytery shall come to the place, or some Ministers of the Word, at the least shall be sent from the Presbytery, whereof one shall Preach to the people concerning the office and duty of the Ministers of Christ, and how the people ought to esteem him for the works sake.

Sixthly, After the Sermon ended, the Minister which hath preached shall in the face of the Congregation, demand of him who is now to be ordained, concerning his faith in Christ Jesus, and his perswasion of the truth of the reformed Religion, according to the Scriptures; his sincere intentions and ends in desiring to enter into this calling, his resolution to be diligent in Prayer, reading, meditation, preaching, ministring the Sacraments, and doing all ministeriall duties towards his charge; his zeale and faithfulnesse in maintaining the truth of the Gospell, and purity of the Church, against Error and Schisme; his care that himselfe and family may be unblameable, and examples to the Flock; and his resolution to continue in his duty, against all trouble and persecution.

Seventhly, In all which having declared himselfe, professed his willingnesse, and promised his indeavours by the help of God; the Presbytery, or the Ministers sent from them, shall solemnly set him apart to the office and worke of the Ministery, laying their hands on him, with a short Prayer or blessing, to this effect.

*THankfully acknowledging the great mercy of God in sending Jesus Christ for the redemption of his people, and for his Ascension to the right hand of God the Father, and there powring out his Spirit, & giving gifts to Men, Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Pastors, and Teachers for the gathering and building up of his Church, and for fitting and inclining this man to this great worke, to beseech him to fill him with his holy Spirit, who in his name we * set apart to this holy Service, to fulfill the worke of his Ministery in all things, that he may both save himselfe and the people committed to his charge.*

* *Here let them impose their hands upon his head.*

Eighthly,

Eighthly, This, or the like Form of Prayer, or Blessing, being ended, let the Minister who preached, briefly exhort him to consider the greatnesse of his Office and Worke, the danger of negligence, both to himself and his people, the blessing which will accompany his faithfulnesse in this life, and that to come; withall let him Exhort and Charge the people in the Name of God, willingly to receive and acknowledge him as the Minister of Christ, and to maintaine, incourage, and assist him in all the parts of his Office. And so by Prayer commending both him and his Flock to the grace of God, after the singing of a Psalme, let the Assembly be dismissed with a blessing.

Ninthly, Let such as are chosen or appointed for the Service of the Army, or Navy, or Colledges, or other Charge, be Ordained as aboveſaid, in such Church as the Classicall Presbytery to which they shall addresse themselves, shall thinke fit; and such Alterations made by the Minister that Ordaineth, from the Exhortation last before prescribed, as the circumstance of place and person shall require.

And be it further Ordained by the said Lords and Commons, and by the Authority aforesaid, That every person formerly Ordained a Presbyter, according to the forme of Ordination, which hath been held in the Church of *England*, and is to be removed to another Charge, doe bring the Presbytery where he is to be placed, a Testimoniall of his Ordination, and of his abilities and conversation, whereupon his fitnesse for that place where he is to be removed, shall be tryed by his preaching there, and (if it shall be judged necessary) by a further Examination, and so, without any new *Ordination*, he shall be admitted, if he be appointed as fit for that place: And if any person Ordained Minister in *Scotland*, or in any other Reformed Church, be designed to a Congregation in *England*, he is to bring from that Church to the Presbytery where he is to be placed, a sufficient Testimoniall of his Ordination, of his life and conversation while he lived with them, and of the causes of his removall; and to undergoe such a Triall of his fitnesse and sufficiency, and to have the same Course held with him in other particulars, as is set down in the foregoing Rule and Provision touching the Examination and Admission of persons formerly Ordained in *England*.

And it is further Ordained, That Records be carefully kept by the

the Regiſter, to be nominated by the Presbytery, of the names of the perſons Ordained, with their teſtimoniall of the time and place of their Ordination, and of the Miniſters who did ordaine them, and of the Charge to which they are appointed; and that no money or gift, of what kinde ſoever, ſhall be received from the perſon to be ordained, or from any on his behalfe, for Ordination, or ought elſe belonging to it, by the Presbytery or any of them, or any appertaining to any of them, upon what pretence ſoever, except to the Regiſter, for the entry, Inſtruments and Teſtimonials of his Ordination, which ſhall not exceed the ſumme of ten ſhillings for each perſon Ordained.

And it is yet further Ordained by the Authority aforeſaid, that all perſons who ſhall be Ordained Presbyters, according to this Directory, ſhall be for ever reputed and taken to all intents and purpoſes, for lawfull, and ſufficiently authorized Miniſters of the Church of *England*, and as capable of any Miniſteriall imployment in the Church, with the rights and profits belonging thereunto, as any other Presbyters whatſoever, already ordained, or hereafter to be ordained; And that all Presbyters, who are hereby appointed and authorized to ordaine, and ſhall (according to this preſent Directory,) ordaine any Presbyters are hereby declared, to performe an acceptable ſervice to this Church and Kingdome, and ſhall have the protection of both Houſes of Parliament for their indempnity.

Provided that this Ordinance ſhall ſtand in force for twelve Moneths, and no longer: Any thing in this Ordinance contained to the contrary in any wiſe notwithſtanding.

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